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ABSTRACT

Instructional materials and facts about vowels and consonants in the English language are presented as an aid in teaching vowel and consonant sounds. Included in this document are: (1) numerous facts about the quantity and type of syllables, monosyllables, vowel sounds, digraphs, and diphthongs in English; (2) a chart listing 18 vowel sounds; (3) a diagram showing the position of the tongue for each vowel sound; (4) an explanation of diphthongs; (5) additional facts about short and long vowel sounds; (6) detailed explanations for each of 19 vowel sounds including examples of common and alternate spellings, a description of how the sound is made, and a list of words containing the sound; (7) lists of additional words containing the five short vowel sounds; (8) a chart listing 27 consonant sounds; (9) an explanation of how different types of consonant sounds are made; (10) detailed explanations for each of the 27 consonant sounds including examples of common and alternate spellings, a description of how the sound is made, and a list of words containing the sound; (11) a chart of 28 consonants and consonant combinations giving examples of the different sounds that each can represent; and (12) a nine-item bibliography of books on phonetics and pronunciation. (DC)

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Vivacious VOWELS

Demonstration Program In Reading

Santa Fe Middle School
146 West Duarte Road, Monrovia, California 91016

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Vivacious VOWELS

WITH CONSONANT SUPPLEMENT

By
Mary Kirschner

DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM IN READING
Santa Fe Middle School
Monrovia Unified School District

Revised 1980

INTRODUCTION

The ability to recognize words through the use of any one or a combination of word attack tools is a prime prerequisite for effective development of comprehension skills.

Word attack skills are developed through a combination of phonetic analysis and structural analysis teaching. In order to effectively teach these skills, it is necessary to understand the organization of the nineteen vowel sounds and the twenty-six consonant sounds in our language as they relate to all areas of language arts.

The following units present this information in an organized, simplified form. It is hoped that it will aid educators in helping them understand not only the auditory elements of phonetic analysis, but the kinesthetic structure as well.

Mary E. Kirschner
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OUR QUEER LINGO

When the English tongue we speak
Why is "break" not rhymed with "freak"?
Will you tell me why it's true
We say "sew," but likewise "few"?
And the maker of a verse
Cannot rhyme his "horse" with "worse"?
"Beard" is not the same as "heard";
"Cord" is different from "word";
"Cow" is cow, but low is "low";
"Show" is never spelled like "foe".

Think of "hose" and "dose" and "lose";
And think of "goose" and yet of "choose";
Think of "comb" and "tomb" and "bomb"
"doll" and "roll" and "home" and "some";
And since "pay" is rhymed with"say"
Why not "paid" with"said", I pray?
Think of "blood" and "food" and "good",
"Mound" is not pronounced like "could",
Wherefore "done", but "gone" and "lone"
Is there any reason known?
To sum it all, it seems to me
Sounds and letters don't agree.

Anon

LAWLESS LANGUAGE

We'll begin with a fox and the plural is foxes
But the plural of ox should never be oxes.
One fowl is a goose and the plural is geese
But the plural of moose won't ever be meese.

So also for mouse the plural is mice
But for house it's houses - never say hice.

Since the plural of man is always men
For the plural of pan why not say pen?

Then one may be that and three may be those
Yet rat in the plural is never called rose.

And masculine pronouns are he, his and him
But imagine the feminine she, shis and shim.

So English, I fancy, you all will agree
Is the most lawless language you ever did see.

Anon

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In a purely phonetic language there are as many letters in the alphabet as there are elementary sounds. Having twenty-six letters in our alphabet, we would expect to have twenty-six elementary sounds.

Actually there are forty-four elementary sounds in English and only twenty-three alphabet letters with which to indicate them because C, Q and X are superfluous:

C has the sound of K as in cap and of S as in cell.
Q is used only with U as in QUilt and has the sound of kwh.
X has the sound of GZ, as in exit, and of KS as in tacks(tax).

The vowels must represent many sounds because the consonants, with very few exceptions, do not vary in the sound they represent.

Our language is not purely phonetic. But the following facts are important in understanding the make-up of our language.

1. Thirteen per cent of all English syllables are not phonetic.

2. Eighty-seven per cent of all syllables in our language are purely phonetic and words in which unphonetic syllables occur are in part phonetic. In fact, there are only two words, commonly used, which are completely unphonetic. These are WHO and EYE. The word of should be added to this list since you are saying "uv."

3. Knowing the phonetic facts about our language, therefore, provides the tool with which pupils may recognize instantly all of our English words.

4. Sixty-two per cent of all English syllables contain the short sounds of the vowels.

   There are 1,320 of these monosyllables. Only 88 of our monosyllables are not purely phonetic and must be taught as sight words. Examples are says, have and does.

   The child who has a thorough knowledge of phonetics therefore will be able to attack independently ninety-four per cent of our English words that contain the short sound of vowels.

5. There are 223 monosyllables containing the short sound of a, as in mad. The only words that are treated as exceptions are have, plaid and bade (not common in this county).

6. There are 223 monosyllables containing the short sound of e, as in led.

7. There are 365 monosyllables containing the short sound of i, as in pin. The only common words that are treated as exceptions are live and give, which must be taught as sight words.

8. There are 134 monosyllables containing the short sound of o, as in top.

9. There are 251 monosyllables containing the short sound of u, as in gun.

These sounds present no difficulty, in either recognition or spelling, for the child who has been carefully taught the consonant and short vowel sounds and how to blend them.

Ten per cent of our English syllables contain long vowel sounds made long by final e, as in made, mete, smile, hope and cute.

Ten per cent of our English syllables contain long vowel equivalents, or digraphs. A digraph is a combination of two letters representing a single simple elementary speech sound which may be either a vowel or a consonant sound.

ai, as in rain
ay, as in day
ea, as in meat
ee, as in feed
ie, as in pie
oa, as in coat
oe, as in hoed
ow, as in grow
ew, as in new
oo, as in moon
oo, as in look
au, as in haul
aw, as in saw

A diphthong is a union of two vowels forming a compound sound. There are four of these in our language:

ou, as in pout
ow, as in cow
oi, as in coin
oy, as in boy

Vowels that are modified by r are often called murmur diphthongs, although a true diphthong is a pure compound vowel sound. They are:

ur, as in fur
ir, as in bird
er, as in her
ar, as in farm
or, as in horse

There are 3,378 monosyllables in our language that contain vowel elements.

The purely phonetic monosyllables number 2,931.

Therefore, 447 monosyllables are unphonetic and must be taught as sight words. Of these 447 unphonetic syllables, 150 are strictly analogical. The appearance of these words is misleading. In other

such as gold and pint we would expect the vowels to be short, but they are long. We would expect the vowels to be long in read, but they are short. The vowel in priest should be long, but it takes the long sound of e.

The preceding data indicate that 87 per cent of our English monosyllables are purely phonetic. Only 13 per cent are either unphonetic or analogical. The same ratio is true of the poly-syllable in our language.

A child will have an independent command of 62 per cent of our phonetic syllables when he recognizes short vowel combinations.

He will have an infallibile key to unlock another 20 per cent of our phonetic syllables when he understands blends with vowels made long by final e and long vowel equivalents.

An understanding of vowels modified by r will contribute another 10 per cent to the student's abilty.

Only 8 per cent of the reading situations confronting the child will need to be taught as special cases, or word analysis, but still governed by phonetic rules.

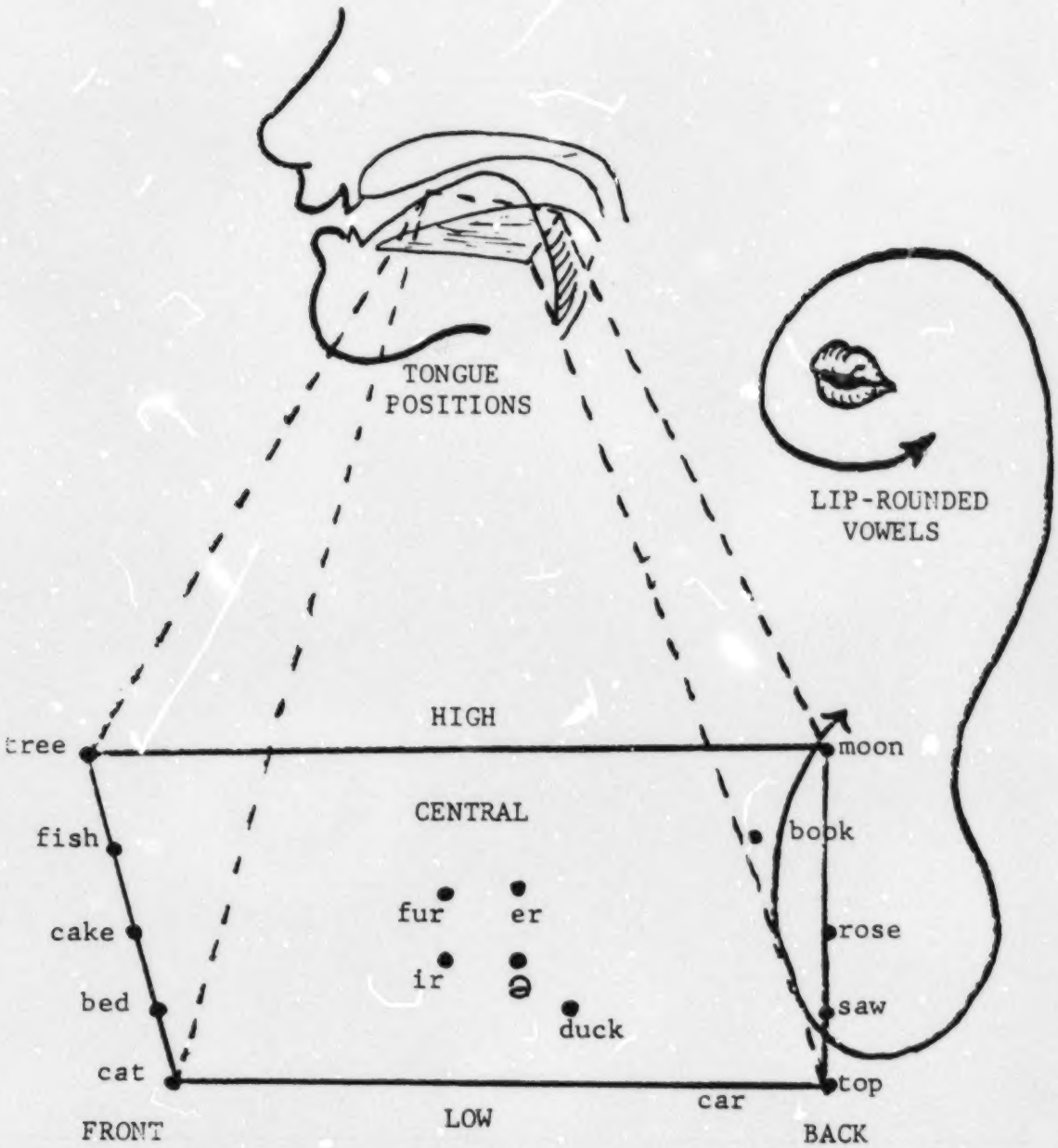
The charts on the following pages include all the vowel sounds necessary in order to master the 3,378 monosyllables in our language.

The primary spelling for these vowel sounds is written in bold black letters, while the secondary spellings are placed underneath in smaller letters.

VOWELS

cake	tree	five	rose	mule
a-e	e e	i-e	o-e	u-e
ay ai	-e ea -y	-y igh	oa ow -o	ew
cat	**bed**	**fish**	**top**	**duck**
- a -	- e -	- i -	- o -	- u -
	ea			
saw			**moon**	**spur**
aw			oo	ur
au a(ll)				er ir or
car			**book**	
a (r)			oo	
			u	
			cow	
			ow	
			ou	
			boy	
			oy	
			oi	
			fork	
			o (r)	

PHYSIOLOGICAL VOWEL DIAGRAM

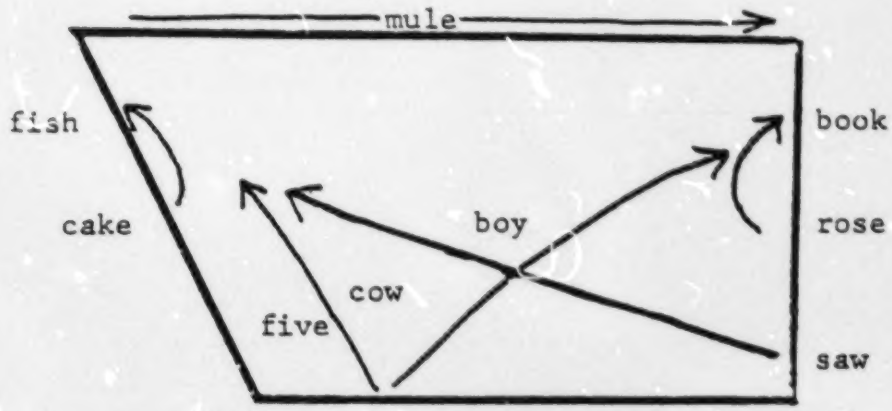


This diagram is a very simple explanation of placement of the vowel sounds. A vowel diagram is useful in developing acceptable pronunciations. On the other hand, we must not forget that the acoustic end result of each vowel can be produced with quite different tongue positions and that this regularly happens in the habitual pronunciation of some speakers.

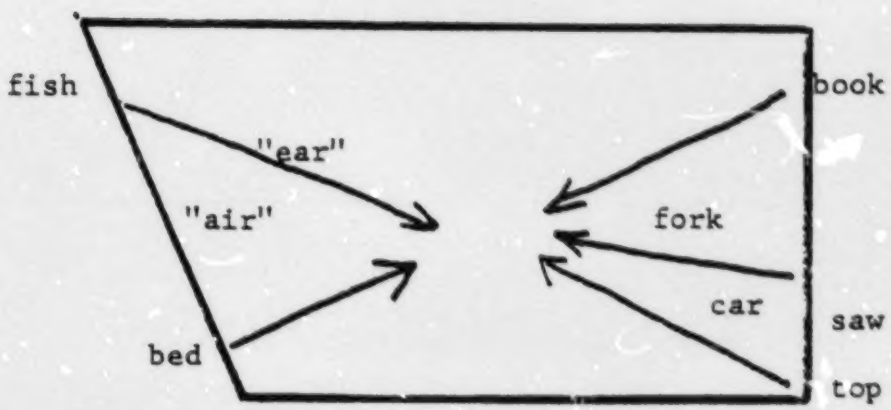
THE DIPHTHONGS

Like vowels, diphthongs are always syllabic. Sounds of this class, however, appear to be formed from the blend or fusion of two vowels spoken together in the same syllable. What actually occurs is that the articulators begin the syllable in the position for one vowel, then shift with a smooth and continuous transition movement toward the position for some other vowel. One can learn to detect the first and second vowels of the diphthong without too much difficulty; yet the blend in actual speech is so close that the dipthong would lose its essential characteristics if it were to be clearly separated by two vowels.

For example, in the word out, as commonly spoken in the General American dialect, the diphthong involves a shift from "top" to a sound resembling the vowel in book; the combination, however, is something different form the two vowels spoken separately in sequence.



DISTINCTIVE DIPHTHONGS



NON-DISTINCTIVE - (CENTERING) DIPHTHONGS

FACTS ABOUT THE VOWELS

Since the short vowels are the most frequently used vowel sounds they are taught first. The long vowel sounds and the other vowel sounds have a number of secondary spellings. This is an additional reason why the short sounds should be first.

1. Sometimes the ee sound is introduced first because it is the easiest vowel sound heard in words. When children see the secondary spelling ea under ee and then again under -e- (bed) they should be told to always try the ee sound first when they see a new word with that spelling. If it doesn't sound right, then try -e-.

2. Y as a vowel sound is seen in two places: with a short dash -y under "five" shows that it has the long sound as in my, sky and fly. With a long dash y under "tree" shows it has the long sound in a poly-syllable word as in baby, pretty, Billy and funny. (Refer to Vowel Chart, page 5.)

   NOTE: I realize this is not correct according to our Standard American Pronunciation Dictionary. But, as this is to be a practical course according to our usage, I feel I must teach it in this manner.

3. -e under ee, and -o under o-e have the long sound in the one syllable words as in me, he she and so, go and no. Little words as to and do must be considered study words. They do not "play fair."

4. With u-e and the secondary spelling of ew we should remember that we may see many words with these spellings but when the words are spoken we do not hear the long u scund. We hear the oo (moon). This will occur after"l" and "r" as in blew, flute, rule, brute.

5. When you see () around a letter or letters on the chart remember that they indicate that those letters are not considered as part of the spelling of the vowel sound. Notice two secondary spellings under the "saw" vowel sound, "a(ll)" and o(r).* Notice under the picture of "car" that the spelling is "a(r)."

   * I also realize that o(r) should appear under this sound according to correct pronunciation but through usage, this sound is also becoming a new vowel sound. We do not drop our r's in California.

6. For the "moon" vowel sound there is no secondary spelling, but for the "book" vowel sound there is one. It is u as in pull or push. The "moon" vowel sound is more frequently used and therefore pupils should be taught to try it first when they see oo in a new word.

7. Under the "cow" vowel sound you find ou and under the "boy" vowel sound oi. These two secondary spellings are used MORE than the primary spellings and therefore students should be made aware of this.

8. or spelling of the "fur" vowel sound is most often used in words of more than one syllable, especially in the final syllable as in doctor, creator, conductor, tailor.

9. When we see "w" at the end of a word or a syllable, it is part of a vowel, as in straw, few, grow, plow.

Eighteen vowel sounds are represented on the Vowel Chart. Horizontally, the top row gives the five long vowels. The pronunciation is indicated by the spelling -a-e. The dash represents a missing consonant sound followed by the silent e which makes the vowel say its letter name, as we know it in the alphabet.

The next row, horizontally, gives the five short vowel sounds. Here, the dash represents a missing letter on each side of the vowel. Most words of one syllable that do not end with an e will have the short vowel sound.

This method of denoting the pronunciation of the vowels is used instead of the usual diacritical marks for long and short vowels. Children will not find diacritical marks in their reading material. After the child has attained skill in hearing the difference between long and short vowels, the introduction of diacritical marks will have more meaning.

The remaining eight sounds are simply called vowel sounds since they are neither clear long nor short vowels. These are spelled with the letter at the top of the vertical column and combined with another letter. Again, by actual count, these eight combinations are those most needed in reading, spelling and writing.

The parentheses around the r in car are there as a reminder that the r often modifies the sound of the vowel. The same is true of the ll in a(ll) in the secondary spellings under say, aw. The l modifies the sound of the vowel.

To correctly teach the 18 vowel sounds, special emphasis must be given to the "schwa" sound. I believe in teaching 19 vowel sounds, introducing the "schwa" sound into the teaching as soon as possible. One section will be devoted to developing this concept.

ee

COMMON SPELLINGS: E AS IN EVEN, EQUAL
EE AS IN SEEM, BETWEEN
EA AS IN READ, EAGER
EI AS IN RECEIPT, DECEIVE

ALSO SPELLED: EO AS IN PEOPLE
OE AS IN AMOEBA
AE AS IN CAESAR

Production of the ee Sound

The ee is the final phoneme of the front-vowel series. For ee the tongue is higher than for any of the other front vowels. For most speakers the tongue nearly touches the anterior part of the hard palate. The lower jaw is raised so that the teeth are nearly in occlusion. The lips are not rounded, and may be noticeably drawn back.

Study the following list of ee words, saying each aloud to familiarize yourself with the distinctive features of this vowel sound.

be	feel	keep	reach	speak
being	feet	least	ream	speech
believe	field	leave	reason	speed
between	fifteen	machine	receive	street

-a-

COMMON SPELLINGS: A AS IN HAT, ADD
AU AS IN LAUGH, AUNT
ALSO SPELLED: AI AS IN PLAID

Production of the

The -a- is the lowest of the front-vowel series, in terms of the tongue position. The tongue lies on the floor of the mouth, but is advanced toward the front. The mouth opening for -a- is wider than for any other front vowel but is less than that for the low-back vowel -o-. The lips are not rounded. A is an unnasalized, low, simple and fairly lax vowel.

The following list contains a number of words in with the -a- sound is commonly heard in English. Note that in some dialects certain of the words may be pronounced with the broad -a-. What sound do you use in context?

The following are words using -a- in stressed syllables.

accident	camp	hand	practically
act	captain	happen	practice
action	catch	happy	ran
actually	contact	hat	sat
add	drastic	land	stamp
animal	exactly	Latin	stand
balance	family	matter	traveling

-e--

COMMON SPELLINGS: E AS IN BED, BEST
EA AS IN BREAD, LEAD

ALSO SPELLED: A AS IN MANY
AI AS IN AGAIN
UE AS IN GUESS
U AS IN BURY
AY AS IN SAYS
EI AS IN HEIFER
EO AS IN LEONARD

Production of the -e- vowel sound

Vowels in the -e- phoneme call for a tongue position somewhat higher than that for -a- and perhaps slightly forward. The jaw closes slightly from -a- to -e-, but the lip position is otherwise similar. The vowel is relatively short and ordinarily pure, or undiphthongized, in comparison with the a-e and -i- and perhaps the -a-. Nasal resonance is not ordinarily a part of this vowel and the tongue tension is described as lax. The -e- may be classified as a lower mid-front, lax vowel.

The following is a list of common -e- words. Do you pronounce any of these with -i-?

again	forget	process
against	get	protect
ahead	hair	read
already	head	remember
amendment	heavy	rest
America	however	said
any	kept	self
attempt	left	set
best	men	seven
better	mental	step
century	method	test
death	never	their
debt	next	them
eleven	pen	twenty
else	prepare	unless

THINK ABOUT

When -e- proceeds the following letters, our speech organs produce the letter name, not the sound for the consonant.

ef as in effort
el as in help
em as in lemon
en as in sent
es as in rest
ex as in extra

-i-

COMMON SPELLINGS: I AS IN SIT, THIN
*Y AS IN DUTY, HYMN
UI AS IN BUILD, E AS IN HERE
U AS IN BUSY, EA AS IN DEAR
EE AS IN DEER, IE AS IN PIERCE
O AS IN WOMEN

Production of the -i- vowel sound

The -i- is directly above the a-e in the front-vowel series. The front of the tongue is somewhat higher than it is for the standard a-e position, and the jaw is moved slightly upward. The subjective impression given by -i- is that of a lax vowel, particularly when compared with ee, which is the highest of the front vowels. The lips are not rounded. The -i- may be classified as a lower high-front, lax vowel. It is relatively short in length and is simple, or without significant diphthongization.

*The -i- and ee vowels are often a source of considerable perplexity to people. In our conversational speech, we often hear ee at the end of a poly-syllable word. The dictionary will give us the pronunciatio of short i. I realize this perplexity, but for this presentation I will use it on the chart as it is spoken in our area. It saves a lot of argument and discussion.

However, the following exercise might help to point out this perplexity. Study the following list of short i words. For which of these do you think acceptable variations in pronunciations exist? Check yourself by looking up some of the pronunciations in the dictionary.

Illustrative words using -i- in stressed syllables.

ability	consider	include	Miss.
activity	continue	Indian	official
been	different	industry	physical
bill	district	information	simple
business	exist	isn't	six
city	fifteen	killed	this
children	give	little	wind
civilization	history	live	without
composition		milk	written

-O-

COMMON SPELLINGS: O AS IN DOLL
A AS IN FATHER, ARE
AR AS IN FAR, PRONOUNCED BY THOSE WHO DROP R'S

ALSO SPELLED: AL AS IN CALM
AH AS IN UTAH
E AS IN SERGEANT
UA AS IN GUARD
HO AS IN HONEST
EA AS IN HEARTH

Production of the -o- vowel sound

The -o- is the lowest of the back vowels in terms of tongue position and is the only back vowel commonly made without perceptible lip rounding. It is relatively undiphthongized and is produced with "relaxed" tongue and ample mouth opening. It is a low-back, lax, unrounded vowel.

Use the following list of common -o- words for practice and reference. The stressed syllable in these words is -o-.

accomplish	father	opera	project
body	follow	opposite	profit
beyond	honor	popular	product
bomb	hot	possible	proper
box	job	population	rock

-u-

COMMON SPELLINGS: U AS IN CUP, STUFF
O AS IN SOME, ABOVE
OU AS IN COUPLE, YOUNG
ALSO SPELLED: OE AS IN DOES
OO AS IN FLOOD

Production of the -u- vowel sound

In the production of the -u- in the General American dialect, the tongue is typically in the lax, lower mid-central position. The lips are open and unrounded. If sounds can be said to require varying degrees of effortful movement, it is likely that the -u- requires the least of all the definite vowels. It is a short vowel, not only in name but in actual duration, and is relatively simple, or undiphthongized. The precise tongue position for this vowel, however, varies somewhat among dialect regions.

The sound -u- is not to be confused in phonetic transcription with the neutral vowel ə, whose resonance it resembles very closely.

Use the following list of -u- words for reference and practice. The -u- is in the stressed syllable.

above
among
another
blood
brother
club
color
come
coming
company
country
cover
cup
cut
done
double
dull
enough
front
fund
government
gum
gun
hundred
husband
income
judge
lover
Monday
money
month
mother
much
none
nothing
number
once
other
production
public
result
run
rush
something
son
stuck
study
subject
such
sudden
suffer
sun
Sunday
thus
trouble
trust
uncle
under
wonderful
young

a-e

COMMON SPELLINGS: A AS IN TASTE, PLACE
AI AS IN RAIN, PAIN
AY AS IN SAY, PLAY
EA AS IN STEAK, BREAK
EY AS IN THEY, OBEY
E AS IN DEBRIS, MESA

ALSO SPELLED: AU AS IN GAUGE
UET AS IN BOUQUET

Production of the a-e vowel sound

As most frequently pronounced in General American speech, the a-e is a step higher than -e- in the front vowel series. To shift from a-e to -e-, one should raise the jaw slightly and bring the front of the tongue soemwhat nearer the alveolar ridge, or front of the hard palate. For a-e the lips are not rounded and there is no nasal resonance as a rule. It is conventionally classified as a higher mid-front, tense vowel.

Study the following list of a-e words. Note the variations in diphthongization which may result from stress or phonetic context.

able
afraid
age
aid
always
away
baby
based
basis
bay
became
break
came
case
change
day
educate
eight
eighth
explain
face
famous
Friday
game
gate
generation
gray
great
illustrate
labor
lake
late
lay
main
maintain
major
making
may
name
nation
Monday
nature
neighbors
page
paint
pay
place
race
radio
rain
remain
same
sale
Saturday
shape
space
state
stage
station
stay
straight
strange
taste
take
taxation
today
train
wait
wave
way
Wednesday
weight

i-e

COMMON SPELLINGS: I AS IN FIND, I
IE AS IN PIE, CRIED
Y AS IN BY, FLY
IGH AS IN HIGH, LIGHT

ALSO SPELLED: AI AS IN AISLE
AYE AS IN AYE
EYE AS IN EYE
UY AS IN BUY
YE AS IN LYE
UI AS IN GUIDE
EI AS IN HEIGHT
IS AS IN ISLAND

Production of the i-e vowel sound

The diphthongal movement of the i-e proceeds from a position near that for the vowel -o- to a position near -i- or ee. In the usual General American production of the sound, the tongue may be somewhat farther forward than for the vowel -o- of "hot." This vowel sound is a glide-plus-vowel combination and can be demonstrated by trying to sustain the sound as a sung tone.

Words in which i-e appears in the initial or medial position:

arrive	fight	life	time
behind	find	light	tried
beside	fire	line	tire
child	five	might	while
combine	ice	mind	white
crime	idea	outside	wife
desire	iron	price	united
drive	island	provide	wise
entire	kind	require	write

Practice making the discriminations indicated for the following pairs of words:

buy	boy	fire	far	fight	fate
fire	foyer	guide	God	high	hay
fired	Freud	high	hah	ice	ace
imply	employ	light	lot	I'll	ale
ire	oyer	like	lock	light	late
rye	Roy	mile	moll	like	lake
sigh	soy	night	not	mine	mane
tie	toy	ride	rod	ride	raid
tile	toil	side	sod	time	tame
try	Troy	time	Tom	wise	ways

o-e

COMMON SPELLINGS: O AS IN MOTE, TOTE
OA AS IN COAT, BOAT
OW AS IN TOW, BLOW
OE AS IN TOE, POTATOE

ALSO SPELLED: OH AS IN OH
OWE AS IN OWE
EW AS IN SEW
OUGH AS IN THOUGH
OU AS IN SOUL
AU AS IN HAUTBOY
EAU AS IN BEAU
EO AS IN YEOMAN
OO AS IN BROOCH
OS AS IN APROPOS

Production of the o-e vowel sound

The o-e is found just below oo on the vowel diagram and is described as a mid-back vowel. In producing this sound, the tongue is between the positions for oo and aw in height, probably somewhat closer to oo. It is described as a tense vowel and has considerable lip rounding. During the production of o-e the tendency is for the tongue to move to a high position and the lips to round more markedly.

Use the following words where o-e is the first or intermediate syllable.

almost	don't	nose	road
alone	goes	note	robe
boat	gold	ocean	smoke
bonus	golden	open	soldier
broke	known	own	spoke
broken	lower	poetry	stone
control	most	program	those
cooperate	motor	post	tones

Words in which pronunciation may vary depending upon stress, dialect, formality and other factors:

fellow	project (v)	pronunciation	so
follow	protection	provide	tobacco
opinion	potatoe	Chicago	tomorrow

u-e

COMMON SPELLINGS: U AS IN MULE, UNIT
EW AS IN FEW, HEW
UE AS IN CUE, HUE
YOU AS IN YOU, YOUTH
IEW AS IN VIEW, REVIEW

ALSO SPELLED: EU AS IN FEUD
EAU AS IN BEAUTY
YU AS IN YULE
YEW AS IN YEW
IEU AS IN ADIEU
UGH AS IN HUGH
EUE AS IN QUEUE

Production of the u-e vowel sound

The u-e is the only distinctive diphthong which may be produced with an on-glide rather than an off-glide change of resonance. The starting point for this glide is approximately the tongue position of the -i- or ee, the consonant symbol j is also present. Note the position the lips will take in production of a true u-e vowel sound.

For you to remember:

When the grapheme u follows the sounds of b, f, g, h, k, m and p, it is decoded as the LONG U sound.

When the grapheme u follows the sounds of d, l, n, r, t, and j (as in jar) it is decoded as the oo sound as in moon.

Try these words and discover this phonetic element in words:

Long U as in mule

bugle
butane
ambulance
accuse
cucumber
cute
rescue

confuse
future
fuse
refuse
fume
commute
amuse
music
mute
muse
mutual

argue

huge
dispute
pupil

human
humor
humid

OO sound as in moon

tune
student
stupid
tutor
duel
due
reduce

clue
conclusion
glue
lunar
include
lur
plume
salute
numeral
brute
crusade
crucial
cruise
true
rule

junior
juvenile
juror
jukebox
juice

aw

COMMON SPELLINGS: A AS IN BALL, CALL
AW AS IN RAW, JAW
AU AS IN FAULT, VAULT
O AS IN SOFT, LOFTY

ALSO SPELLED: OUGH AS IN OUGHT
AUGH AS IN CAUGHT
AH AS IN UTAH
OA AS IN BROAD
AL AS IN TALK

Production of the vowel sound aw

The aw is classified as a higher low-back, rounded vowel. It is produced with greater lip and tongue tension than characterizes -o- and with a tongue height which is between the positions for o-e and -o-. As aw is pronounced by the typical American speaker, its most significant feature is possibly lip rounding.

The aw is one of a somewhat varied and complex group of sounds which may be called the ah vowels. The two sound families within this group are most easily represented by the symbols -o- and aw.

Practice these words:

aught	Ott	awning	owning
caught	cot	caught	coat
core	car	called	cold
for	far	clause	close
law	lah	daunt	don't
naught	not	gnaws	nose
wrought	rot	hauled	hold
taught	tot	Raleigh	roly

Read these sentences:

All the boys in our room took a walk.

Shall we talk about the things the boys saw?

Ted saw some cows in the corn field

Ben saw a horse with a very short tail.

Words using aw in the stressed syllable:

across	brought	say
almost	call	tall
already	cause	taught
although	daughter	walk
also	draw	wall
ball		

a(r)

COMMON SPELLINGS: AR AS IN ART, STAR
ALSO SPELLED: EAR AS IN HEART
ER AS IN SERGEANT
UAR AS IN GUARD
OR AS IN SOME PRONUNCIATIONS OF FOREST

Production of the ar vowel sound

This is the widest mouth position you will make for any vowel sound. When a child goes to the doctor and is asked to open his mouth, this is the sound he will make.

This historical development of the ar has led to some interesting dialect differences and spelling inconsistencies.

The ar diphthong features an off-glide from the stable low-back -o- to the central-vowel position for the "r-colored" vowels. R is not a part of this vowel sound, but it governs the pronunciation of it. People who "drop their r's" are pronouncing the true word sound of this combination.

Words nearly always pronounced with ar:

army	card	farm	heart
are	article	farmer	part
artist	dark	guard	start
bar	far	hard	star
bark	farther	large	market

Distinguish between the following pairs of words:

card	cod	lock	lord
lark	lock	card	cord
shark	shock	far	four
far	fah	part	port
part	pot	star	store
farther	father	bar	bore
dark	dock	mar	more

o͞o

COMMON SPELLINGS: OO AS IN TOO, BOOT
U AS IN RULE, STUDIOUS
O AS IN MOVE, TOMB
EW AS IN GREW, KNEW
EU AS IN FLUE, DUE
OU AS IN TROUPE, GROUP
OE AS IN SHOE
WO AS IN TWO
ALSO SPELLED: UI AS IN FRUIT
OUGHT AS IN THROUGH

Production of the oo vowel sound

The oo is the highest, most tense and most rounded of the back vowels. In its production the lips are often almost puckered. The teeth and jaws, although as nearly closed as they are for any other back vowel, are "semilax," or parted about the same amount as for the a-e of the front series. In its normal pronunciation in American English, oo is markedly diphthongal. During production of this sound the tongue ordinarily continues to rise and the lips continue to round.

Words that are pronounced oo by most speakers:

afternoon	goose	movement	through
blue	group	noon	tomb
cool	include	prove	soup
choose	into	room	to
do	loop	roost	too
doing	loose	root	two
doom	lose	route	who
food	mood	rule	whom
fool	moose	school	whose
fruit	moon	soon	zoo
grew	move	super	

COMMON SPELLINGS: OO AS IN LOOK, TOOK
U AS IN PULL, FULL
ALSO SPELLED: OUL AS IN COULD
O AS IN WOMAN
OR AS IN WORSTED

Production of the oo vowel sound

The vowel oo stands just below oo (moon) in the vowel diagram and is therefore classified as a lower high-back vowel produced with lax tongue and only moderate lip rounding.

Lip rounding is greater for oo (moon) than for oo (book).

Read these words:

could	cooed	look	Luke
boor	booer	pull	pool
full	fool	stood	stewed
good	gooed	should	shoed
hood	who'd	wood	wooed

Words that are nearly always pronounced with the (book) vowel sound:

book	hood	poor	sugar
bull	hook	pull	took
cook	look	put	woman
could	looking	putting	woman
full	nook	shook	wood
foot	output	should	would
good		stood	

OW

COMMON SPELLINGS: OW AS IN HOW, OWL
OU AS IN LOUD, OUCH
ALSO SPELLED: AU AS IN KRAUT
OUGH AS IN BOUGH
HOU AS IN HOUR

Production of the ow vowel sound

The ow is an off-glide diphthong which proceeds from the relatively more stable resonance of the (top) and glides off toward the vowel quality of (book), though perhaps not always reaching that point.

The amount of resonance change is often very small, perhaps less than occurs in any other distinctive diphthong. This is one of the easiest vowel sounds to hear in words.

The following list of words can be used for reference and practice:

about
account
allowed
amount
brown
crowd
cloud
around
count
doubt
down
found
flower
ground
hour
house
how
however
mount
mountain
mouth
now
our
out
outer
output
outside
pound
power
round
shout
sound
south
thou
thousand
throughout
town
without

Read the following sentences aloud, slowly and carefully. Find the words containing the sound of ou as in round, cow.

Bob Brown saw a clown in town.

The crowd stood near the clown.

The brownie ran around the clown.

The crowd shouted and shouted.

"Bowwow! Bowwow!" said the dog.

The clown wore a funny crown.

He put the crown on the brownie.

The crown fell to the ground.

oy

COMMON SPELLINGS: OY AS IN TOY, ENJOY
OI AS IN OIL, COIN
ALSO SPELLED: EU AS IN FREUD

Production of the oy vowel sound

The change which produces the diphthong oy is from a low back vowel (aw) to a high-front vowel near ee or -i-. The extent of the off-glide in oy is greater than for any other diphthong. In native American speech there do not appear to be many difficulties with this sound.

Practice the following sound discriminations:

voice	vice	boy	burr
boil	bile	Boyd	bird
coin	kine	avoid	averred
foil	file	coy	cur
point	pint	foil	furl
poi	pie	foist	first
Lloyd	lied	noil	knurl
Lawyer	liar	poi	purr
oil	isle	voiced	versed

Read the following sentences aloud, slowly and carefully.

Roy is a boy in our school.

He was our choice for captain of our team.

The boys enjoy playing baseball.

Twelve boys joined the club.

Joyce is Roy's little sister.

Joyce has lots of toys.

o(r)

COMMON SPELLINGS: OR AS IN FORM, SHORT
OUR AS IN COURSE, COURT
AR AS IN WARM, WARD
OAR AS IN HOARSE, OAR
ALSO SPELLED: EOR, AS IN GEORGE

Production of the or vowel sound

In this diphthong, the gliding is from the more stable resonance of a back vowel near aw or o-e toward the position of the central vowel ur.

It is a very real question whether the or, aw and ar should be considered distinctive diphthongs or simply important variations of a single phoneme. For our purposes, they are treated as variations of a single sound, since this seems the best way to describe the usage of most speakers of General American.

In the following paragraph, the diphthong or is used 18 times. How do you pronounce many of the words referred to:

"In the morning we boarded the foreign ship from the wharf at the foot of Fourth Street. Going forward toward what we supposed was our cabin, I was thrown into a mortal panic to discover that my passport and tickets were not in the portfolio or the pocket where I was certain I had placed them before the quarrel with Horace. After a few moments of mental torture, and a show of concern I would normally abhor, I was fortunate to find the missing documents."

Practice saying these words:

board	bowed	more	maw
court	coat	tore	taw
more	mow	tore	tar
store	stow	core	car
toward	toad	board	bard
board	bawd	pour	par
court	caught	shored	shared
lord	laud		

ur

COMMON SPELLINGS: ER AS IN TERM, HERD
IR AS IN STIR, WHIR
UR AS IN HURT, BURST
OR AS IN WORD, WORST
EAR AS IN LEARN, EARN

ALSO SPELLED: OUR AS IN COURAGE
YR AS IN MYRTLE
OLO AS IN COLONEL

Production of the ur vowel sound

The ur is described as a mid-central, r-colored vowel, produced with moderate jaw opening, considerable tongue tension and no significant lip rounding. There are two distinctly different methods of production of this sound. The easiest to visualize is the retroflexed-tongue production in which the tip of the tongue is curled back or retroflexed in the oral cavity. The second method of production, probably of more frequent use, features an arching of the tongue in its mid-portion.

(Note: The definition given above is for the ur in terms of the stressed syllable.)

The following words use er-ir-ur in stressed syllables:

bird	early	jerk	stir
burn	earth	learn	term
clerk	earnest	occur	third
church	furnish	person	thirty
circle	fur	personnel	Thursday
curve	further	personality	turn
certain	curse	purpose	were
certainly	German	purse	word
concern	heard	return	work
concerning	her	serve	world
commercial	herself	skirt	worth
dirt	hurt	squirt	worst

The ə is a short, lax, mid-central, r-colored vowel which can be produced by tongue retroflexion and which is to be found only in unaccented syllables. Some examples are:

after	desire	higher	river
answer	dinner	junior	proper
better	discover	order	under
brother	ever	paper	weather
center	father	outer	wonder
color	finger	sugar	worker
daughter	future	smaller	

ə

THE SCHWA SOUND

COMMON SPELLINGS:		
	A AS IN ALONE, SODA	A AS IN MOUNTAIN
	E AS IN SYSTEM, THE	EI AS IN MULLEIN
	I AS IN EASILY, POLICY	EO AS IN DUNGEON
	O AS IN GALLOP, OF	IA AS IN PARLIAMENT
	U AS IN CIRCUS, SUPPLY	OI AS IN PORPOISE
		OU AS IN CURIOUS
		HE AS IN VEHEMENT

This sound also may be spelled in any of the ways used to "er" sounds for people who drop their r's.

Production of the ə vowel sound

The ə is a lax, mid-central vowel, but this designation falls short of an adequate description of the sound. Its classification is relatively unimportant, compared to its function in the stress pattern of the language. It has been variously called the Neutral, Unstressed, Indefinite, Schwa, or Obscure Vowel, all these terms suggesting the character of the sound.

The ə is neutral inasmuch as there is actually no truly standard tongue position typical for it. It is unstressed because it is pronounced with the least energy of any of the vowels and tends to be lower in pitch and shorter in duration. It is indefinite or obscure because it has little in the way of identifiable vowel quality of its own; it is rather a kind of 'vocal murmur," a name by which it has sometimes been known.

Physiologically, the tongue and other articulators do not always reach the height or shape necessary for definite vowel resonances within the brief time interval and lax muscular conditions of an unstressed syllable.

One reason why no tongue position can be described for ə is that the adjustment of the articulators is determined to some degree by the position for the vowel of which it is a "reduced" version, as well as by the amount of stress, the nature of the surrounding sounds, the length of the syllable and other such factors.

PRONUNCIATION: Problems in the proper use of ə and incidental difficulties in phonetic transcription center to a large extent around a seeming unawareness of the frequency with which the sound occurs in English. It is not unusual to obscure more than one-third of the syllables in conversational pronunciation.

Words with ə in the initial position:

another	ago	amount	away
about	against	another	upon
above	ahead	appear	occur
accomplish	alone	apply	occasion
across	along	around	enough
advance	allowed	attempt	essential
again	among	attention	

Words with ə in the initial syllable:

believe	complete	community	present
before	committee	machine	project
between	concern	supply	prepare
consider	commerical	suppose	provide
continue	consumer	today	protect
correct	compose	together	perceive
control	combine	produce	reserve

Words with ə in the middle syllable:

activity	difficult	educate	primarily
benefit	illustrate	immediately	policy
company	economics	industry	probably

Words with ə in the final syllable:

audience	given	April	period
balance	graduate	material	problem
basis	greatest	mention	profit
cases	happen	million	purpose
children	human	minutes	reason
common	hundred	moment	science
dishes	husband	movement	second
different	idea	Mrs.	seven
environment	individual	nation	several
even	insurance	natural	system
expression	interpret	normal	taken
experience	interest	often	thousand
foreign	instant	open	Washington
German	isn't	opera	woman
government	judges	parents	

Words with ə in more than one syllable:

ability	develop	experiment	philosophy
accident	education	instrument	political
amendment	efficient	intelligent	population
American	element	generation	possibility
beautiful	especially	national	president
commercial	evidently	occasion	principle
composition	essential	official	protection
condition	examination	opposite	production
department			requirements

Words whose weak form uses the vowel ə or drops the vowel entirely:

a	from	just	the
am	had	must	then
an	has	my	them
and	have	of	to
as	in	on	us
at	is	shall	was
but	it	than	what
can	its	that	you
could			

SHORT VOWEL WORD LISTS

On the following pages will be found lists of words which represent the short vowel sounds. These lists may be used as drill in dividing and hearing the designated vowel sounds in words of more than one syllable.

The "long sounds" of the vowels are not included because of the many different spellings represented by these vowel sounds.

Short A Syllables

Two Syllables	Poly Syllables
hatchet	magnificent
ladder	entanglement
chapter	hazardous
flannel	lavender
napkin	mathematics
satin	decapitate
transplant	evaporate
subtract	banishment
compact	transfigure
basket	cantankerous
plastic	distraction
phantom	bankruptcy
contract	javelin
barren	financial
vastly	manual

Short I Syllable

Two Syllables	Poly Syllables
profit	blissfully
shiver	contradict
timber	interception
civil	insecure
vigor	illumination
witness	distrustful
cricket	incentive
tribune	relinquish
inject	discipline
blissful	filament
sincere	insinuate
index	affliction
insane	magnificent
immense	terminal
chimney	inherit

Short O Syllables

Two Syllables	Poly Syllables
profit	prodigy
collar	glossary
robber	robbery
modest	crockery
donkey	prognosticate
fossil	consolidate
common	accomplishment
honor	improbability
hemlock	consonant
object	compliment
blossom	volunteer
bottom	populate
stocking	polygon
pocket	botany

Short U Syllables

Two Syllables	Poly Syllables
summit	customary
study	voluntary
muffler	triumphal
number	promulgate
punish	thunderous
shudder	circumvent
flutter	punishment
trumpet	successful
umpire	distrustful
stubborn	disgusted
adult	compulsive
result	substantial
subtract	fundamental
thunder	gluttonous
punish	tumultuous

Short E Syllables

When e preceeds the following consonants, the letter name is pronounced instead of the sound. This is why "short e" is hard to hear in many words. (Notice how this happens in some of the words listed below.)

ef as in effort	em as in lemon	es as in rest
el as in elephant	en as in sent	ex as in extra

Two Syllables	Poly Syllables
beggar	irrevocable
chestnut	renaissance
letter	crescendo
pencil	cybernetics
elder	creditor
twenty	federalize
sentence	prevaricate
shelter	reverend
splendor	revolution
penny	several
desert	separate
message	sentiment
exclaim	aeromedicine
pepper	memorize

CONSONANT SUPPLEMENT

CONSONANTS

VOICELESS	VOICED	NASALS	SEMI-VOWELS/GLIDES
p-	b-	m-	
wh-	w-		qu-
f-	v-		
th-	th- (this)		
t-	d-	n-	l-
s-	z-		r-
sh-	(zh)		y-
ch-	j-		
k-	g-	-ng	-x
h			

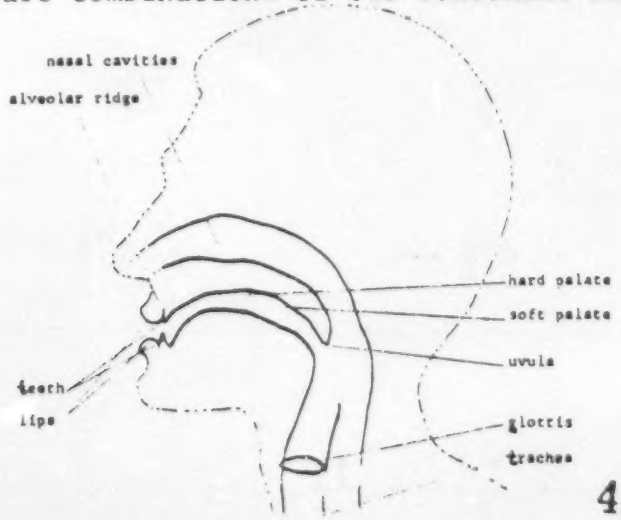
The Consonants of American English

A consonant is a speech sound which involves stoppage or a major modification of the stream of air as it leaves the lungs and goes out the mouth or nose. Consonants may be either voiced or voiceless; this is an important distinction and worth explainig. Sounds, either consonants or vowels, made with the vocal folds located in the glottis vibrating are voiced; those made without such vibration are voiceless. To feel the difference, one should put his thumb and forefinger on his Adam's apple, the popular name for the glottis, and say in succession the s at the beginning of sit and the z at the beginning of zoo, being sure to pronounce only the first sound of each word and not the following vowel. With the z one feels a vibration in the glottis which is absent when s is pronounced.

Consonants may be, furthermore, either oral or nasal. The sounds at the end of dam, tan and tang are the three nasal sounds in English. In their production the velum or soft palate is relaxed so that air passes from the nose. What makes the three sounds distinct is the variation of the resonance of the oral cavity caused by difference positions of the lips and tongue.

Consonants may be further classified by the type of modification of the stream of air. Some, like the initial ones in pan, ban, tan, den, kin and get, involve a complete stoppage, though a brief one, of the stream of air and are called stop sounds. Generally, though not always, the air is stopped in the mouth. Other consonants are called fricatives, and in the production of these the vocal organs are so modified that the friction of air as it leaves the mouth makes a distinctive sound. Such fricative sounds occur at the beginning of words such as fan, van, sue, zoo, thin, then, sugar and in the middle of azure. Another fricative occurs at the beginning of hot, here the distinctive modification being made in the glottis. English consonants also include two sounds called affricatives, these being produced with a stop which is released to a fricative position. The words charge and jet begin with these sounds.

We have twenty-six consonants in all. Four sounds are sometimes called semivowels and/or glides because they have qualities in common with vowels; these occur at the beginning of let, went, red and yet as well as in other positions in words. Qu as in quiet and x as in the final position of box are combinations of two consonant letter sounds.



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p –

COMMON SPELLINGS: P AS IN PAY, TOP, PIG
PP AS IN APPLE, TAPPING
ALSO SPELLED: PH AS IN SHEPHERD
GH AS IN HICCOUGH

Production of the unvoiced consonant p

To produce this sound the unvoiced breath stream is impounded by closing the lips; pressure is built up behind this closure during a hold, or short period of silence, and is then released by opening the lips.

Pronunciation Practice

pie	papa	up	space	speech
pay	paper	cup	spring	splash
paint	puppy	skip	kept	stamped
park	suppose	keep	pray	place
put	pumpkin	sheep	tips	wrapped

b –

COMMON SPELLINGS: B AS IN BRING, BEAR, BET
BB AS IN BUBBLE ROBBER

Production of the voiced consonant b

The articulation movements involved are essentially the same as for p, except that voice is added. It is generally held that b is made with somewhat more lax lip closure and a lesser degree of breath pressure than p.

Pronunciation Practice

Bay	abe	babe	break	clubs
Bee	rob	bib	brown	rubs
bow	rub	bob	black	clubbed
boy	web	bulb	blue	stubbed

wh-

COMMON SPELLINGS WH AS IN WHILE, WHEEL, ANYWHERE
U AS IN QUITE, QUICK AND OTHER QU WORDS

Production of the unvoiced consonant diagraph wh

The lips are rounded and protruded, and the back of the tongue is raised. The teeth are slightly separated and the tip of the tongue touches the lower teeth. The breath passes out in a continuous, voiceless stream.

The wh is one of the relatively few scunds in English that has a virtually consistent seplling; hence there are not often spelling-pronunciation errors. A search of the dictionaries in common use turned up the following list for where wh calls for h: who, whole.

Pronunciation Practice

what	when	where	why	which
where	awhirl	awhile	anywhere	somewhere

w

COMMON SPELLINGS: W AS IN WET, WAGON, SWING
O AS IN ONCE, CHOIR

Production of the voiced consonant w

Purse the lips as if you are about to suck lemonade through a straw, but instead of sucking in, the breath passes out in a continuous stream as in oo. The vocal chords vibrate and both lip and tongue movements occur.

Pronunciation Practice

way	we	wagon	week	sway
swing	twenty	twin	wear	weather
world	wine	were	well	ward

f

COMMON SPELLINGS: F AS IN FLY, FAN, AFTER
FF AS IN AFFAIR, STAFF
PH AS IN PHONE, PHOTOGRAPH
GH AS IN TOUGH, LAUGH

Production of the unvoiced consonant f

In its articulation the lower lip is raised into light contact with the cutting edge of the upper central teeth; an unvoiced breath stream is forced through this light contact in a relaxed, audible yet voiceless, continuous stream of air.

Pronunciation Practice

off	wife	safe	affirm	conform
perform	fife	fluff	fly	flap
front	free	laughing	offer	suffer
taffy	laughed	left	laughs	stuffs
far	fir	few	Fay	if

V—

COMMON SPELLINGS: V AS IN VALENTINE, VICTIM, VERY
F AS IN OF
VV AS IN FLIVVER
PH AS IN STEPHEN

Production of the voiced consonant v

With the teeth slightly apart, lift the lower lip upward and inward and lightly touch the edge of the upper teeth; a continuous stream of voiced breath escapes between the teeth.

Pronunciation Practice

eve	I've	you've	convex	convey
review	revolt	having	braver	given
starved	waved	saves	stoves	

th-

COMMON SPELLINGS: TH AS IN THREE, THINK, PATHWAY, MYTH

Production of the unvoiced consonant digraph th

With the lips slightly parted, place the edge of the tongue gently against the lower edge of the upper front teeth and allow the breath to escape through the mouth in a voiceless, relaxed, continuous, controlled stream as in thing, thumb, thirty.

Pronunciation Practice

thaw	thing	thumb,	thermos	threw
earth	oath	wrath	youth	cathedral
pathetic	unthankful	author	birthday	unthinkable
healthy	nothing	thread	through	births

th-

COMMON SPELLINGS: TH AS IN THIS, THAT, OTHER, BATHE

Production of the voiced consonant digraph th

This consonant sound is produced in the same way as the unvoiced th with the exception of the adding of the voice. There is an addition of vibration in the tongue with the addition of the vocal cords.

Pronunciation Practice

this	that	them	those	they
thou	though	bathe	clothe	smooth
soothe	although	breathing	other	rather
bathes	breaths	clothed	soothed	these

t—

COMMON SPELLINGS: T AS IN TELL, HAT, TOP, TO, INTO, AT
TT AS IN ATTEND, ATTEMPT
D AS IN TALKED, ASKED
ALSO SPELLED: CT AS IN INDICT,
GHT AS IN BROUGHT

Production of the unvoiced consonant t

The tongue tip is placed on the alveolar ridge behind the upper central teeth. The sides of the tongue lie against the side teeth. The teeth are slightly separated. Breath pressure is built up behind this closure, then released as the tongue moves either to the position for the next sound or, if there is not sound immediately following to a neutral position. The sound heard is the noise produced as the breath, under pressure, strikes the hard and soft surfaces at the front of the mouth.

Pronunciation Practice

tea	tie	two	eat	ought
ate	at	taught	Tate	tight
attach	atone	between	esteem	better
bottle	bottom	butter	stand	stay
train	try	straight	string	lets
puts	lost	past	kept	stopped
laughed	soft	rent	want	pants
tents	cashed	pushed	parts	carts
fenced	glanced			

d—

COMMON SPELLINGS: D AS IN DISH, DO, BODY, HAD, DOG, BED
DD AS IN SADDER, ADD

Production of the voiced consonant d

The d is classified as a voiced stop-plosive and is made essentially the same way as t, except that voice is added. D is ordinarily articulated with somewhat less force than t and has little or no aspiration.

Pronunciation Practice

day	die	do	dough	dad
add	aid	eyed	odd	dead
deed	did	produced	reduce	today
model	indicate	modern	study	draw
dress	end	round	called	cold
beads	loads	card	ford	calmed
tamed	bagged	rigged	pleased	raised
robbed	stabbed	behaved		

S —

COMMON SPELLINGS:	S AS IN SEE, AS, SAW, ASIDE, CLASS
	SS AS IN CLASS, PASS
	SC AS IN SCIENCE, SCENE
	C AS IN CIRCLE, CYCLE
ALSO SPELLED:	SCH AS IN SCHIZM
	PS AS IN PSYCHOLOGY

Production of the unvoiced consonant s

With the lips in a slightly smiling position, the teeth lightly closed, the tongue hidden behind the teeth, the stream of breath is directed over the tip of the tongue, escaping between the front teeth in a voiceless, continuous, hissing sound.

Pronunciation Practice

see	say	saw	sir	ace
ice	us	use	cease	sass
source	souse	concern	consist	instead
restore	fasten	lesson	passing	possible
scare	sky	scream	square	slat
smoke	snake	spare	splash	sprain
stay	straight	sway	cuffs	staffs
lacks	belts	bumps	once	tanks
lips	force	arts	first	lasts
hits	deaths	fenced	mask	

Z —

COMMON SPELLINGS:	Z AS IN ZERO, ZEBRA, PLAZA, FEZ
	S AS IN HAS, HIS
	ZZ AS IN BUZZ, RAZZ
ALSO SPELLED:	SC AS IN DISCERN
	X AS IN ZYLOPHONE

Production of the voiced consonant z

The production for the articulation of z is the same as for s, except the voice is added and there is less forceful articulation.

Pronunciation Practice

zee	Zoe	zoo	zebra	as
ease	eyes	is	Czars	Z's
Zoe's	soos	deserve	disaster	nasality
resign	dozen	easy	pleasant	using
jobs	rubs	beds	fords	bags
digs	bells	comes	swims	hands
winds	brings	sings	hears	wears
bathes	breathes	saves	stoves	

sh-

COMMON SPELLINGS:
SH AS IN SHOE, FASHION, PUSH, SHAKE
SS AS IN PASSION, FISSION
TI AS IN MENTION, VACATION
CI AS IN DELICIOUS
CE AS IN OCEAN
XI ANS IN ANXIOUS
CH AS IN MACHINE
SU AS IN SURE

Production of the unvoiced consonant digraph sh

With the teeth lightly closed, the lips slightly protruded and squared, raise the tip of the tongue and blow. The sides of the tongue are against the upper gum, and a continuous stream of voiceless breath is directed over the tip of the tongue.

Pronunciation Practice

she	shoe	show	shy	ash
rash	wash	wish	ashamed	cashier
insure	machine	fashion	motion	washer
wishing	shrew	shrink	pushed	rushed

(zh)

COMMON SPELLINGS:
ZH AS IN MEASURE, LEISURE
Z AS IN AZURE, GLAZIER
G AS IN ROUGE, REGIME

Production of the voiced consonant digraph (zh)

The production is the same as for sh, but there is less breath pressure. However, this voiced consonant digraph does not appear at the beginning of any English word.

Pronunciation Practice

beige	garage	mirage	prestige	corsage
rouge	negligee	regime	rouged	casual
usual	pleasure	measure	vision	camouflaged

ch-

COMMON SPELLINGS: CH AS IN CHERRY, CHANGE, WATCH, CHAIR, CHICKEN
TCH AS IN MATCH, CATCH
T AS IN QUESTION, NATURE
ALSO SPELLED: C AS IN CELLO

Production of the unvoiced consonant digraph ch

With the lips slightly parted and fanned out, the teeth almost closed, place the tongue-tip gently against the ridge of the gum just behind the top teeth. Press the breath stream against this tongue-tip tooth-ridge closure, then suddenly release the tongue and allow the breath to escape through the mouth in a sudden little whipered explosion.

Pronunciation Practice

chair	chill	chore	chow	unchanged
each	etch	itch	ouch	picture
church	perchance	recharge	unchecked	pitcher
purchase	urchin	bench	ranch	punched
launched				

j-

COMMON SPELLINGS: J AS IN JUNE, JUMP, JAR
G AS IN AGE, AGITATE, GEM
DG AS IN EDGE, BUDGE
ALSO SPELLED: DJ AS IN ADJUST
GG AS IN EXAGGERATE
D AS IN SOLDIER

Production of the voiced consonant j

With the lips slightly parted, the front part of the tongue is raised and pressed lightly against the hard ridge of the gum just behind the upper front teeth. Then the tip of the tongue is released, making a little voiced explosion. The sounds j and ch are made the same except that j is voiced and ch is whispered.

Pronunciation Practice

jay	joy	age	edge	ridge
jce	urge	George	judge	adjust
major	adjudicate	adjunct	rejuvenate	paging
region	Roger	judged	raged	orange
range	ranged			

k-

COMMON SPELLINGS:
K AS IN KEY, KEEP, KING
C AS IN CAT, CAB
CH AS IN CHARACTER, ECHO, SCHOOL
CK AS IN LUCK, PICK
CC AS IN ACCOUNT, ACCURATE
KH AS IN KHAKI

Production of the unvoiced consonant k

With the teeth and lips slightly apart, lift the back of the tongue against the soft palate. The breath bursts out in a voiceless puff. When k is made as a plosive, what is heard is the friction noise as the breath, under pressure, strikes the hard and soft surfaces in the front of the mouth.

Pronunciation Practice

coo	cur	Kay	key	ache
irk	oak	Ike	cake	coke
cook	kick	become	income	recount
backer	bucket	taken	vacant	school
sky	crown	cry	clay	clip
scratch	looked	parked	sank	think
linked	thanked	ask	risk	fork
park				

g-

COMMON SPELLINGS:
G AS IN GO, GET, GOAT
GG AS IN BEGGAR, TRIGGER
GH AS IN GHETTO

Production of the voiced consonant g

To produce the sound of g, the back part of the tongue is raised so that it comes in contact with the soft palate. The teeth are slightly separated. Then the back part of the tongue is suddenly lowered, allowing the breath to escape in a little explosion. The sound g has voice in it. The vocal chords vibrate.

Pronunciation Practice

gay	go	goo	guy	egg
ugh	hog	gag	gig	Greg
ago	began	forget	regret	bargain
beggar	biggest	struggle	green	grow
glass	glue	bags	digs	bagged
logged				

h –

COMMON SPELLINGS: H AS IN HORN, HAT, HEAD, HIM
ALSO SPELLED: WH AS IN WHO

Production of the unvoiced consonant h

With the lips lightly parted, release the breath through the mouth in an audible yet voiceless, continuous sigh.

Pronunciation Practice

half	hay	heard	he	him
horse	hoe	who	ahead	ahoy
behave	behind	enhance	perhaps	vehicle
unhood	rehearse	forehead	mayhem	

The following paragraph is for practice and identification of the h sound:

How can the English alphabet be overhauled so as to hold a more highly consistent relationship to the speech it is somehow supposed to represent? He who has hitherto had hardly any experience with phonetics will perhaps have held no honest convictions on the subject. But even self-taught phoneticians will usually be happy to help you out by having you hear their well-rehearsed plans for an over-all overhaul of an alphabet which they consider wholly outmoded and in general behind the times. The public, however, is highly successful and generally behaves with habitual indifference toward its academic hecklers, no matter how high their scholarly honors.

m—

COMMON SPELLINGS: M AS IN MONKEY, ME, MET
MM AS IN COMMENT
ALSO SPELLED: LM AS IN CALM
MB AS IN LIMB
GM AS IN PHLEGM
NM AS IN HYMN

Production of the nasal consonant m

Lips shut while voice passes through the nasal passages. In English articulations, the voice escapes by the nose only, but reverberates in the mouth.

Pronunciation Practice

may	me	moo	my	aim
am	arm	him	mom	maim
admire	amass	commence	remit	coming
hamlet	rumor	stammer	smell	smoke
comes	tombs	blamed	lump	stamp

n—

COMMON SPELLINGS: N AS IN NO, NEST, NEVER
NN AS IN ANNOY, CANNOT
ALSO SPELLED: GN AS IN GNAT
KN AS IN KNOW
PN AS IN PNEUMONIA
MN AS IN MNEMONIC

Production of the nasal consonant n

Point of the tongue shut agains the upper gum while voice passes through the nasal passages. The soft palate is relaxed as the voice breath stream is directed through the nose. The lips are opened slightly. The basic tongue adjustment corresponds to that for the plosives t and d.

Pronunciation Practice

nay	no	knee	gnaw	an
earn	in	on	known	nine
none	canoe	enough	renew	banner
earning	many	cotton	sneeze	snow
bones	hens	burned	ground	bent
count	once	rents	bunch	ranch
orange	barn	torn	ganged	bounced

-ng

COMMON SPELLINGS: NG AS IN SWING, SING, LONG, SUNG, SANG
N AS IN SINK, THINK, ANXIOUS

Production of the medial/ending consonant digraph -ng

The middle of the tongue is brought into contact with the soft palate, which is relaxed. With the tongue held in this position, the voiced breath stream is emitted through the nose. The tongue position resembles that for the plosives k and g.

Pronunciation Practice

rang	ring	long	wrong	hanger
longing	ringing	singer	English	ginger
longer	single	blanket	conquer	sink
thank	think	honks	things	wrongs
junked	thanked	hanged	thinks	wronged

l-

COMMON SPELLINGS: L AS IN LEAF, LOOK
LL AS IN WILL

Production of the voiced lateral consonant l

The standard sound is made with the tonguetip against the alveolar ridge, but with the tongue adjusted in such a manner that its margins do not touch the teeth and gums at the sides. With the tongue held in this position, the voiced breath stream is emitted, flowing laterally on either side. The teeth are slightly apart.

Pronunciation Practice

lay	lee	lie	low	ale
earl	eel	Lill	loll	lull
asleep	hello	rely	ability	careless
pulling	solid	battle	bottle	saddle
claim	cloth	slick	slow	flower
black	fills	holes	hulk	milk
help	help	film	helm	like

r-

COMMON SPELLINGS: R AS IN RUN, RED, RABBIT
RR AS IN HURRY, CARROT
ALSO SPELLED: RHY AS IN RHYME
WRI AS IN WRITE

Production of the voiced linguapalatal glide consonant r

Point the tongue turned up to the spring of the hard palate and made to vibrate by a stream of breath directed over it. When the tip of the tongue is narrowed and presented without contact to the upper gum or front part of the palate, the passage of the breath causes the tongue to quiver or vibrate more or less strongly and the sound of r is produced.

Pronunciation Practice

(Note: these words are only for consonant r pronunciation.)

raw	run	red	ray	row
rye	crack	cry	breathe	brown
group	grow	train	try	draw
drive	pray	press	friend	fry
strain	street	scream	screw	threw
thrust				

y-

COMMON SPELLINGS: Y AS IN YET, YESTERDAY, YES, YOU
I AS IN MILLION, UNION
U AS IN THE DIPHTHONGS OF USE, UNION

Production of the voiced linguapalatal glide consonant y

Top or front of the tongue raised and shut at the sides leaving only a small center aperture through which voice passes out. The tongue in forming this sound is almost in position for the vowel e but the aperture over the center is closer.

Pronunciation Practice

you	your	year	yet	yes
yield	yawn	yard	youngster	yoeman
beyond	barnyard	beyond	opinion	companion
union	million	William	Daniel	Italian
junior				

qu-

COMMON SPELLINGS: QU AS IN QUICK, QUIT, QUEEN
CQU AS IN ACQUIRE, ACQUAINT

Pronunciation of the unvoiced consonant qu

Q is always followed by u and the combination of qu is equivalent to KWH as in queen, quick. Many reference books refer to qu as a combination of kw. This is incorrect pronunciation.

Pronunciation practice

quick	quite	quart	quiet	quick
quilt	quench	quarrel	square	squeak
squaw	squirrel	squirm	request	frequent
acquire	acquaint	acquit	acquittal	

-x

COMMON SPELLINGS: X AS IN BOX, SIX, OX
EX AS IN EXTRACT EXTRACTION, EXIT, EXTRA

Pronunciation of the final unvoiced consonant x

X is the equivalent of ks, as in box. In combining the two elements k and s, it is often well that the teeth be placed in position for s before the k is given. Think of the word kiss and leave out the vowel sound.

Pronunciation Practice

six	ox	box	fox	thinks
six	ox	box	fox	thinks
thanks	milks	talks	walks	wakes
likes	looks	cooks	books	asks
desks	tasks	makes	tusks	

When the vowel e precedes the consonant x, the letter name is pronounced and not the sound:

exist	extra	expansion	exit	explanation
expert				

Of the 26 consonant sounds in our language, only m and v remain constant at all times. The other letters have more than one sound or are silent in some arrangements.

B	
bug	b
lamb	silent
debt	silent

C	
cat	k
cent	s
ocean	sh
scene	silent
lock	silent

CH	
chick	ch
chorus	k
chiffon	sh
sandwich	j
yacht	silent

D	
duck	d
hauled	d
jumped	t
waited	ed
handkerchief	silent
badge	silent

F	
five	f
of	v

G	
gone	g
giraffe	j
garage	zh
high	silent

GH	
ghost	g
laugh	f
sight	silent

GN	
gnat	n
dignity	g-n

H	
have	h
humble	silent
ghastly	silent
rhyme	silent

J	
judge	j
hallelujah	y

K	
kite	k
know	silent

L	
leaf	l
talk	silent

M	
make	m

N	
not	n
solemn	silent

P	
pan	p
photo	f
psalm	silent
pneumonia	silent

PH	
phone	f
Stephen	v

QU	
queen	kwh
unique	k
liquor	ker

R	
red	r
murmur	ur

S	
see	s
days	z
sure	sh
vision	zh

T	
top	t
listen	silent
the	the
watch	silent

TH	
teeth	breath
they	voiced

TI	
question	ch
nation	sh

V	
vine	v

W	
wind	w
sew	o
wrong	silent

WH	
who	h
whale	wh

X	
box	ks
exist	gz
xylophone	z

Y	
year	y
play	silent
sky	i vowel
ready	e vowel
boy	oi

Z	
buzz	z
seizure	zh

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